updates from the border

a collection of newsletters by Masa Nazzal

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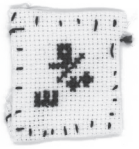


Foreword *Jeanne Coppens*

On a quiet summer night in Glasgow, while I was visiting Masa from Brussels, we gathered in her living room to read the newsletters she had written a few months earlier, in the winter of 2023 to 2024, when she had joined the No Name Kitchen (NNK) grassroots collective in the small town of Bihać, on Bosnia's state frontier with Croatia. Together with five teammates, Masa spent months monitoring border violence committed by the Croatian police and Frontex as part of the EU's governance of people on the move.

Over a series of eight emails, each titled *Update from the Border*, Masa communicated with her friends, family, and fellow organisers across the world to make sense of the violence she was witnessing while living in Bosnia: the genocide committed by the Zionist forces on Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and traces of illegal pushbacks on the EU's frontiers. Oscillating between affective journaling and political reporting, Masa developed a distinct militant poetics to probe how racial capitalism, ecocides, and border violence are so deeply interconnected, from the US to Turkey, from Croatia to Palestine.

As we read in silence, the eight newsletters conveyed the deep moral fractures of a Europe

that professes enlightenment but enacts barbarism at its frontiers, while showing how people on the move temporarily carve out a life in those fractures. It felt urgent to bring Masa's newsletters together as a pedagogical tool that exposes the border violence that the EU so readily conceals. What if we began thinking about Europe not through abstract notions of freedom and mobility, but from the burn piles Masa describes, where border police systematically seize and destroy the belongings of people on the move? Phones, passports, cherished belongings and crucial documents thrown onto a pile in a remote forest and set ablaze. The following pages are interspersed with photographic traces of these incinerated objects.

Later that evening, as we rummaged through a large suitcase containing remnants of the borderlands, Masa recalled a conversation with a fellow organiser. They explained that every time someone crosses a border they are not allowed to cross, the project of border abolition becomes more real. This reflection did not align with a *Doctors Without Borders*-style narrative, which frames borders primarily through emergencies and universal suffering, often obscuring the specific, devastating impacts of border enforcement. Rather, they evoked a revolutionary politics that, as Luke De Noronha and Gracie Mae Bradley write in their recent book *Against Borders*, is "based on the

conviction that there will be no liveable futures in which borders between political communities are violently guarded."

Although the term 'border abolition' may be relatively recent, it belongs to a much longer tradition of anti-carceral, anti-state, and no-border resistance, from Sojourner Truth to George Jackson, from Abolish Frontex to the Critical Resistance organisation. Abolitionist thought and practice are often misunderstood as merely dismantling long-standing structures of oppression. Yet there is an essential constructive and imaginative dimension to abolitionist projects. As our revolutionary predecessors tell us: in the act of tearing down, other forms of relating will always (re)appear. Or in the words of the poet Aimé Césaire in *Discourse on Colonialism*: "It is not a dead society that we want to revive... It is a new society we must create."

Many border abolitionists have also insisted that to imagine life without passport controls or checkpoints or Frontex or facial-recognition technologies, we need to understand what the border is, and what it does. *Understand to strategise*. Borders follow people around; they are everywhere, at the centres and the margins. Inside that first handshake between the worker and the employer. Some privileged ones don't feel the borders at all—the world, for them, is an expansive

playground. Others have just arrived at the other side of the border, with a sense of restrained relief. But borders, and their accompanying mechanisms of control, are a very recent thing. Only in the 19th century did colonial nation-states introduce infrastructures to monitor and prevent people from walking on the lands that settler-colonisers claimed to be theirs. And the nation-state as we know it is just one political formation among an infinite number of other ways of relating, moving, and organising on tangible lands.

The volatile character of nation-states became so evident to me during a panel discussion on *sans-papiers* (undocumented) politics in Brussels. A migrant-rights worker asked the audience a deceptively simple question: "What determines who can and cannot cross a border?" People suggested a few words: "A right? Citizenship? A visa? Transportation?" "No," she nodded, "just a stupid piece of paper; *une bête feuille.*" In saying this, she wasn't dismissing the very real power of that "piece of paper"—the residence card, the visa, the ID, the passport. She was pointing to something else: that borders are not about protection or security but about maintaining the *totalising fiction of the modern nation-state*. Against this overpowering tale that tells how human survival depends on powerful, militarised nations competing over territory and resources, excluding intruders, and creating deserving citizens, the

speaker's simple words highlighted that borders are just as arbitrary as they are real. And as abolitionists, there's an urgency to confront the dual character of border-ness. *Understand to strategise*.

In the process of editing and thinking through Masa's eight newsletters, this publication began to unfold as a story of unmaking borders—an antithesis to the totalising fiction of the nation-state. More intimately, it is a story on how to live with despair, to not let it metastasise into generalised bitterness. Indeed, Masa staunchly refuses to describe her friends and comrades on the move as mere victims of the precarious, unjust situations they live in. While the encounters she narrates are certainly tainted by harrowing border violence, they also contain borderless tenderness, imagination, and solidarity. *Updates from the Border* testifies to how friendship materialises as a cornerstone of border-free worlds, even when they are not yet here.

Brussels, October 2024

This publication accompanies Masa Nazzal's first cassette, *Slovenia Inshallah* released by the Glasgow-based label Greater Lanarkshire Auricular Research Council (GLARC).

To those who transgress these violent borders.

To those who hold the weight of truth.

To those who hold open this reality.

To those who dare to dream, move, and act for a new world.

Newsletters *Masa Nazzal*

#1 Tuesday, November 14

Dear friends, family, and anyone else who stumbles on this newsletter,

I have decided to start this newsletter as a way to archive my experience working at the border between the EU (Croatia) and Bosnia, documenting state-sanctioned border violence against people on the move. Before continuing to read this newsletter I want to caution you that there is content containing extreme violence and police brutality.

Over two weeks ago I arrived here in Bihać, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to conduct fieldwork reporting on border violence at the European Union's Croatian border with Bosnia. I am working alongside a team of four other activists here. We are a non-hierarchical self-organised group who are providing direct aid, food, clothes, and medical support to people who have been illegally pushed back by European Union border police forces. Alongside this work, the team here is collecting evidence and testimonies of these pushbacks, creating an archival database of border violence.

The term "pushback" is used to describe the illegal process by which European Union border police illegally detain and return people across the border without any legal due process. In addition, we try not to use the politicised term "migrants" to refer to the people we are working with; everyone has a different journey that led them to find themselves in the precarious position trying to reach Europe. For that reason, we either use the term 'people on the move (PoM)', or simply 'friends'. The work we want to do here is to contextualise this political situation through their voices and experiences. For more on the legal and political context of our work, see this introduction from the Border Violence Monitoring Network, at borderviolence.eu/about/the-balkan-route.

Over a week ago we got reports of burn spots across the border. They were traces of the Croatian police detaining people, burning their belongings, and then displacing them back into Bosnia. The informant was able

to provide an exact location of these burn spots, so two of our team members cycled to Croatia to investigate. When they arrived the situation was far worse than expected. We initially anticipated to see a small burn area where few items were incinerated, but instead we discovered a massive collection of four burn sites next to one another. In the ashes, hundreds of melted phones (that don't burn easily), remnants of clothing, backpacks, shoes, passports and passport photos, and burnt folders—which we know usually hold people's official documents used to apply for asylum once they reach Europe—were identified. The perpetrators of these illegal incinerations are the Croatian border police, who usually work under the cover of darkness in unofficial uniforms and black balaclavas to conduct violence outside the eyes of the law. By burning identification documents, the police are effectively burning away people's identities. They force PoM to become invisible non-citizens within a nation-state system, removing with their belongings the easier possibility of applying for asylum once they arrive at their chosen destination.

We returned a few days later to collect more evidence, but witnessed something far more worrying than the initial sighting: the entirety of the space had been cleared up. The hundreds of burnt phones were now only in the dozens. Remnants of items hidden in the ashes were gone. Cleared away for no one to see. In addition to items discarded, a few burn spots were covered with newly dug piles of dirt. We can only assume that the Croatian police were trying to cover up their tracks because these actions are against the very laws they "claim" to uphold. It is scary for us to think of the violence committed at the border as a well-oiled machine. These pushbacks have become a profitable industry for the Croatian border police. Where officers detain people on the move, stealing any and all of their money before brutalising them, burning their belongings and finally covering up their tracks so no one knows what happened.

A few days ago I interviewed my friend Tarrek who had recently been pushed back by the Croatian police. Travelling for a few days with five others from Bihać, Tarrek had reached the border between Croatia and Slovenia, but before crossing was picked up by an unmarked white van with six Croatian police in unofficial

black uniforms and balaclavas. The van would on occasion stop en route to detain more people on the move before reaching its final destination, the Bosnian border. None of the people detained were given access to food, water, or restrooms for the 10-12 hours they were in the van. When they arrived at a forest space near the border the officers forced the twenty detained men to line up in groups of ten and to kneel with their heads down.

At this point the police officers had removed some of the men's clothing, shoes, and other personal items. Any person who disobeyed orders was slapped or hit by police batons. According to Tarrek, two Afghan men were severely beaten by the police, as they were lining up the men. The police collected their items which included clothes, phones, backpacks, and even the holy Quran and a prayer rug, setting them all aflame. Following this scene, Tarrek recounted that a few police officers pointed their guns at the group, while others used batons to push and force people into the Korona River, thereby crossing the Croatian border and forcibly reentering Bosnia. One of the individuals pushed into the river by Croatian authorities was an ill man who couldn't walk. Tarrek and another friend held this man and guided him across the river to the Bosnian shore before calling for medical attention to accompany the man back to the migrant camp in Bihać.

There is a reason most of these violent acts are committed by officials without uniforms. The EU attempts to hide its hypocrisy. It attempts to cover up evidence. Europe wants you to believe that there is nothing to see. This is just one of many testimonies we have collected in the field. These stories are not anomalies, they are the product of Europe's systematic violence directed at people on the move. My friend Hassan, who is in his sixties and currently on the move from Turkey towards Germany, perfectly contextualised the political situation he finds himself and others in:

> "Europe must stop being closed to people and allow the people of all countries it has impoverished to seek hope in their own countries and it is the duty to investigate all the illegalities committed here. Otherwise, all these discourses will remain as an indicator of Europe's hypocrisy, and will not eliminate the fascist character of the crimes that Croatia wants.

If Europe wants to be civilised, it must first condemn these crimes against humanity committed by them. This unnecessary pressure being put on refugees must be removed."

This pressure Hassan speaks of is growing amongst people as winter is fast approaching. We believe many people are attempting to cross the border as fast as they can now before the entire landscape is snow-covered. This only brings with it the possibility of further violence. As there is no safe and legal pathway for many of these people, the only solution they have is to rush to find a way out, because living in forest camps or squats is no longer a solution when the winter months come.

Amongst the team there is also fear that we are running out of resources to provide. With the increase of police violence, especially the stripping, stealing, and burning of people's clothes and shoes, we are faced with the risk that we will no longer have any shoes or coats to provide. Our team (of 5 people!) is the only functional group working with people on the move in Bihać. If we do not have means to provide them shoes or clothes, then people are left without items to protect themselves from winter.

Recently, our team has started a donor box for anyone who wants to donate to the work we do. The money would go towards repairing squats, as well as buying winter items for people. If you have the economic means to provide please do (but no pressure): ~~donorbox.org/let-s-get-ready-for-winter-in-bosnia.~~ I want to clarify that donating is not an act of charity but a contribution to fight injustice. We believe in the saying "nobody needs charity when there is justice". You contributing to the work we do is an act of solidarity with people who have been brutalised and violated by border regimes.

The people I have worked with in the past few weeks are not victims of their circumstance, that is not what I want this letter to convey. Rather they are people who have an immense capacity to persevere in a world system that is unjust and violent towards them. In the face of injustice and precarity, they remain steadfast in their optimism and hope for a better future. They still believe that there is more to life than the immediate reality of being on the move and more to life than the situation and place they were born in. This radical hope

should inspire all of us. To believe that we can and deserve more than the condition in which we were born is not only beautiful but revolutionary.

I am thankful to share language, laughs, and stories with my fellow friends. I am thankful that many of them still have immense capacity to trust even within this harsh environment. Most of all, I am thankful for the shared solidarity. Every person I have met while at the borders has expressed a strong sense of solidarity and empathy towards me when I tell them I am Palestinian. I came here to give solidarity, and did not expect to receive it in such abundance. That is the testament to the characters, heart and soul of the people I have met. Their ability to reverse this solidarity has given me my own space to process this immense collective grief over Palestine. For that I am eternally grateful.

From the borders of Europe to the borders of Palestine, injustice in all its forms must be fought against. We must all find ways to continue this fight.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

P.S. This newsletter is not a closed circuit. If you want to forward this to people, please do. The more people who know what's happening the better.

#2 Friday, December 1

Dear friends,

I want to start by first recounting the events of November 8th. It was one of the hardest days I've had since being in the field. My teammate Adam and I went to investigate a burn spot inside Croatia, the same spot I mentioned in the last newsletter.

We drove to this gravel road located in the middle of a dense forest next to the Korana River which traces along the Croatian-Bosnian border. We only saw one old sheep farmer who lived in this section of the Croatian backcountry, surrounded by a few dozen abandoned buildings decomposing into the ground. There was nothing there. Only a skeleton of a past community.

Other than the lone farmer, the area was occupied completely by police and military officers. Being there wasn't illegal but it felt like it was. We knew that we'd need a cover for searching through this border area, so we pretended to be ignorant hippie tourists who wanted to see an old church at the other end of the road.

As we continued deeper through the forest, trying to find any evidence of burn spots, we noticed traces of human life. The little trails people made as they moved through the forest. Carving their footprints into the ground, reforming the ecology through their movement. There was something really powerful about seeing the presence of people without people. The presence of migration through the ecology—the stomped leaves, broken branches, the flattened bushes people slept on, the little trails marking the grass pressed upon by stomping feet.

These makeshift trails were everywhere. As we went deeper into the forest looking for the burn spots, we saw the remnants of children's shoes, medicine, and lost backpacks scattered across the paths. We saw where people slept, where people gathered, where people moved and where people hid.

These forests are dark and I think they will carry that darkness for a long time. To be in sight of an active atrocity holds a different type of weight. This is not history, this is not past misfortune and injustice. This is now. This is Europe in the present day. These are the conditions of life in Europe. These are the atrocities of Europe.

The forests near Bihać are also scattered with explosive mines left behind from the war in the Balkans during the mid-nineties. This is just another element of danger that PoM face as they travel through minefields, because there is no legalised or safe path to cross the border.

It is eerie to call this movement "the game', a slang term often used to describe the attempts to cross the border. People are playing against the police to try to make it through the frontiers, but that "game" is their lives, that "game" is them hiding in the forest alone, that "game" is not just a matter of a few days but months of liminal movingness in militarised borderlands. To bear witness to this intensity and to see the level of militarization added to my understanding of the violence contaminating this ecology.

I have never seen such a heavily militarised zone. Every 5-10 minutes a new van would come, stop us, ask us for our documents, investigate why we were here and then let us go. They needed to know my nationality before deciding what they were allowed to do with me. That's the reality: if I said I was Syrian, if I said I was Arab, if I said I was from any other place in the global south their reaction would've been different. Their reaction to us was determined by the nationality we proclaimed. I was American and Adam was British.

We left without finding the burn spot. There was a point where we felt as if our cover could no longer hold.

A few days later we drove to the Bosnian side of the border, parallel to the Croatian road we were on while scouting. From the road we could see the hilly forests where people cross the border. In the distance, in between the trees, we noticed five active burnings. We knew from being in the location prior, satellite imagery, and conversations with locals, that there were no people living there. We also knew from informants that these forests were the site of both the burnings and pushback. The only conclusion we found was that the large plume of smoke rising from the trees rose from police incinerating people's belongings before pushing them back.

As we continued driving down the road we came across a gas station where we found eight Moroccan men sitting, drying their clothes. As we approached them we realised that they had been incredibly injured, cold,

wet, and hungry from being pushed back by Croatian police into the river only a few hours earlier.

The men had no access to food or clean water for almost a whole day when we met them. One man pointed at the puddle in front of him and said that the only water he was able to drink was from the ground.

As we tended to their wounds, they described how the Croatian police handled them. Their legs, arms and chests were covered in bruises and open wounds from extensive beating by the Croatian border patrol. Omar, a 17-year old from Morocco who was among the eight men in the gas station, recounted how he begged the Croatian police not to attack him, but they did anyway:

> "I am not allowed to cry. I cannot cry, but Croatian police are a problem, a very big problem. They treated us like dogs. The mountain is on my back and tears are falling."

According to the men, the Croatian police had forced them to enter into the deeper end of the river to cross back into Bosnia. The water in the deep end reached up to their chest, even though there was a shallow crossing nearby, the Croatian police did not allow them to pass through there.

The gas station that these men were sheltering in was almost 60 km from Camp Lipa, the transit camp near Bihać that many PoM stay in once they've been pushed back. Bosnian law prohibits us from driving PoM in our vehicles, because if stopped we could be charged with human smuggling and imprisoned by the police. Our only option is to call IOM, the International Organization of Migration, who transport people from various locations across the north-west of Bosnia to Camp Lipa. Yet, the waiting times for these rides can be lengthy, between eight to twelve hours.

It is moments like these, the gaping void between legality and humanity becomes so (painfully) apparent. We could've given them a ride. In many ways I regret that we didn't. The limits of my liberties took priority over the extent of my humanity. That is something I have to process within myself.

Recently the Bosnian government shut down the squats around the gas station, which people used to shelter. The SFA, or Service for Foreigners Affairs, a department of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ministry of

Security, enforced this repressive policy over the past few years to completely shut down any squat along the northern border of Bosnia and Croatia. They call this "Operational Cleaning Up". It involves Bosnian police caving in the squats' roofs, removing walls, and flattening the entire building to the ground, so that these spaces become uninhabitable. In addition, they remove any object inside that belongs to PoM and burn them, such as sleeping bags, clothes, and food. Anything that was left behind, they burned. The intention of the Bosnian government is to eliminate the possibility for PoM to find shelter near the border, forcing them to go to Lipa Camp. A camp that is a 6 hour walk from Bihać, isolated, in the middle of the forest in Bosnia. A concentration of 1,500 people trapped in this space. Without legal escape, without dignity to participate in society. In the forest. Etched at the edge.

We have received reports that the Bulgarian military was inside Camp Lipa this past week, blocking people from leaving eating halls. The military would take groups of 5-10 people at a time and force them to give them their fingerprints. According to our informants, there were no translators, and people were not being told the reason.

I don't know what gives the Bulgarian military the authority to do this outside their borders. I don't know why they were trapping people to extract their biometric information. What I do know is that in the past week there has been foreign military presence inside northern Bosnia, with sightings of French, Romanian, and Bulgarian military officials and vehicles.

I can't help but see this event as tied to the wider changes in Balkan and EU politics in the past couple months. Last month, Bosnia signed an agreement with Frontex, with the support of EU officials, to launch an integrated border-management[1]. Frontex (or the European Border and Coast Guard Agency) is a European Union agency, which basically functions as the EU's very own border security guard. It has a budget of 5.6 billion euros, and has an army of 10,000 which monitor, surveil, violate, brutalise, and police people on the move. Now, they are coming in force to Bosnia. This new agreement would mean that Bosnian border officials are going to be working with Frontex for its border "management", alongside already existing official Croatian/EU border control teams.

Europe wants securitization, militarization and the externalisation of their borders. And they are willing to throw billions of euros each year to do so. The increased militarization of the border has also become a profitable initiative for Croatia. In a report disgustingly called, "Managing Migration", we learned that the EU has already provided Croatia with a €163.13 million budget for border control between 2015 and 2021.

€122.03 million of that budget is provided by the EU's Internal Security Fund, an agency that has been increasingly using thermal detecting technology, drones, helicopters, and other forms of surveillance technology to apprehend people on the move, as well as funding towards an increase in border patrol officers.

This money could have been used to provide basic human needs to people, good living conditions in camps, safe passage for people on the move, easily accessible asylum processes, instead, it is used to feed the systemic violence inflicted to PoM.

Violence is an easy solution, but humanity is not. Violence is a moment. A strike. It is an immediate halt in the listening. It is an act that rejects hearing. Humanity requires listening, understanding, and negotiating the reality of our own world to create a shared vision of the future. To create this shared vision of humanity requires the work of all of us to transform these systems that violate and dehumanise people toward a future that demands the justice of all.

The snow has now arrived at the borders. I am scared to know what this means. All we can do now is continue this work. Continue to record and archive. One of these days hopefully these systems will tumble down. But until then solidarity must persist.

I keep this sentiment that my friend Moccine told me close to my heart whenever this work gets too hard and too big:

> "Dreams can be so powerful that they can move you through borders"

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

1 https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-signs-agreement-serbia-strengthen-migration-and-border-management-cooperation-2024-06-25_en

#3 Monday, December 4

Dear Friends,

I was not expecting to write another newsletter so soon, but circumstances require it. But this one is about a different border.

I woke up this morning doing what I usually do, checking my phone for the updates on Gaza. More death, more destruction. Nothing seems to be slowing down Israel's genocidal war machine. My brain can no longer wrap itself around the extent of these deaths. The 16,000+ people, the 6,000+ children. Entire infrastructures of society stomped to the ground by iron missiles.

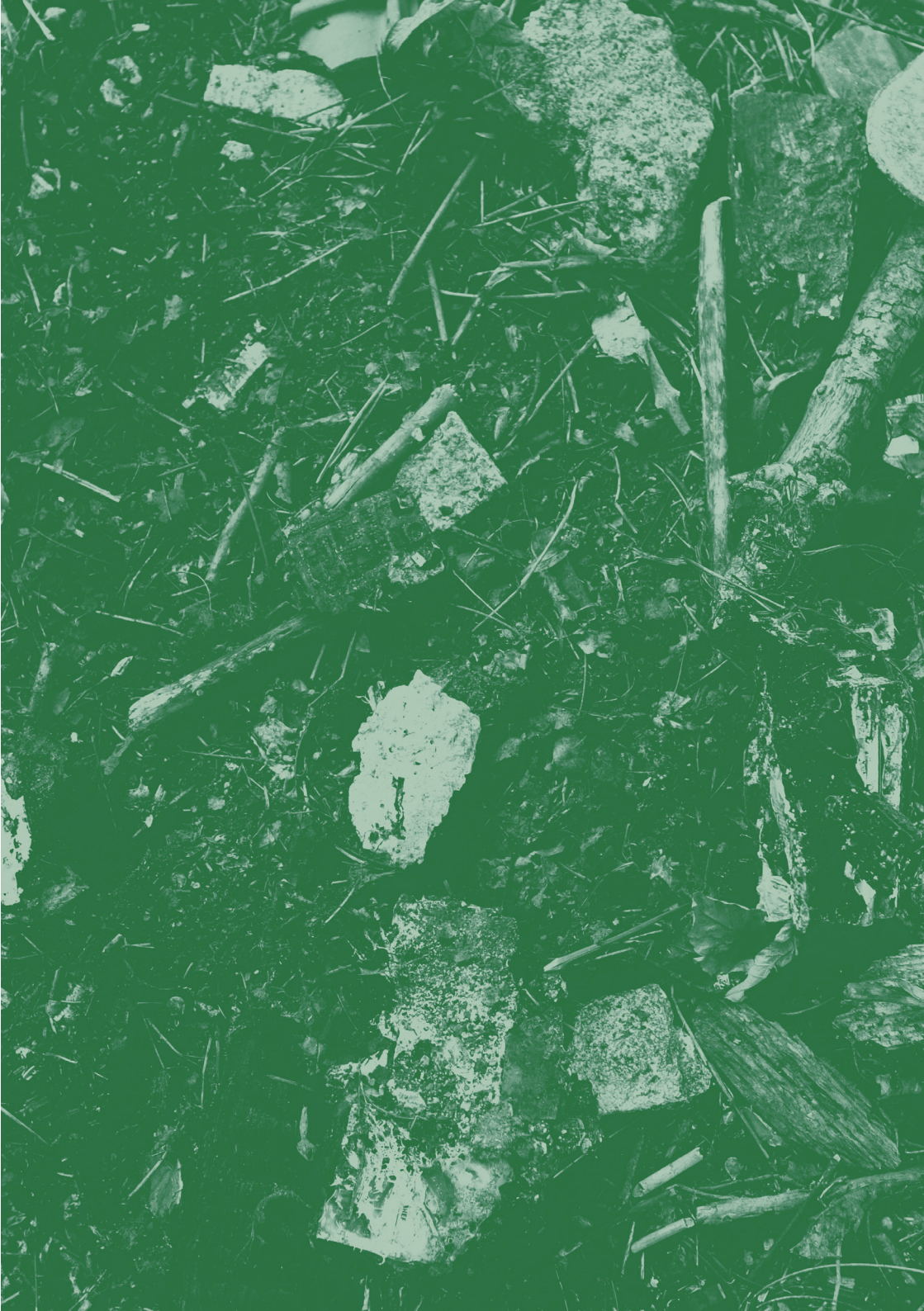
As I continued to scroll on Al-Jazeera's live updates I saw the news of more deaths and raids in the West Bank. More specifically, in Qalqilya, where my father's side of the family lives. I quickly called my aunt who lives there to try to understand what was happening.

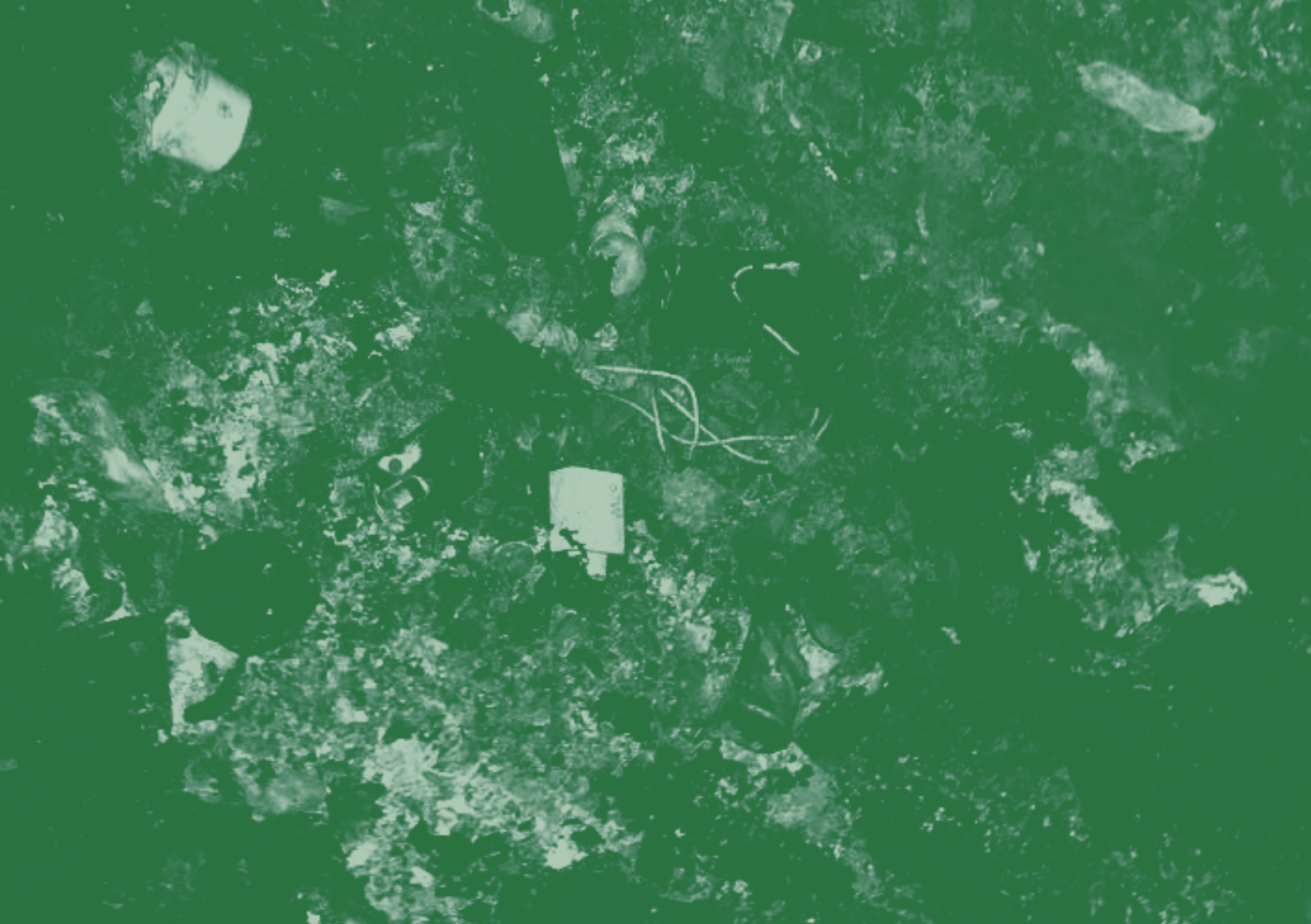
She explained that early this morning (December 4th) another member of my family was martyred by the Israeli army - Alaa Nazzal, along with another young man, Anas Qaraqe. They were in a car when soldiers opened fire on them, killing them instantly.

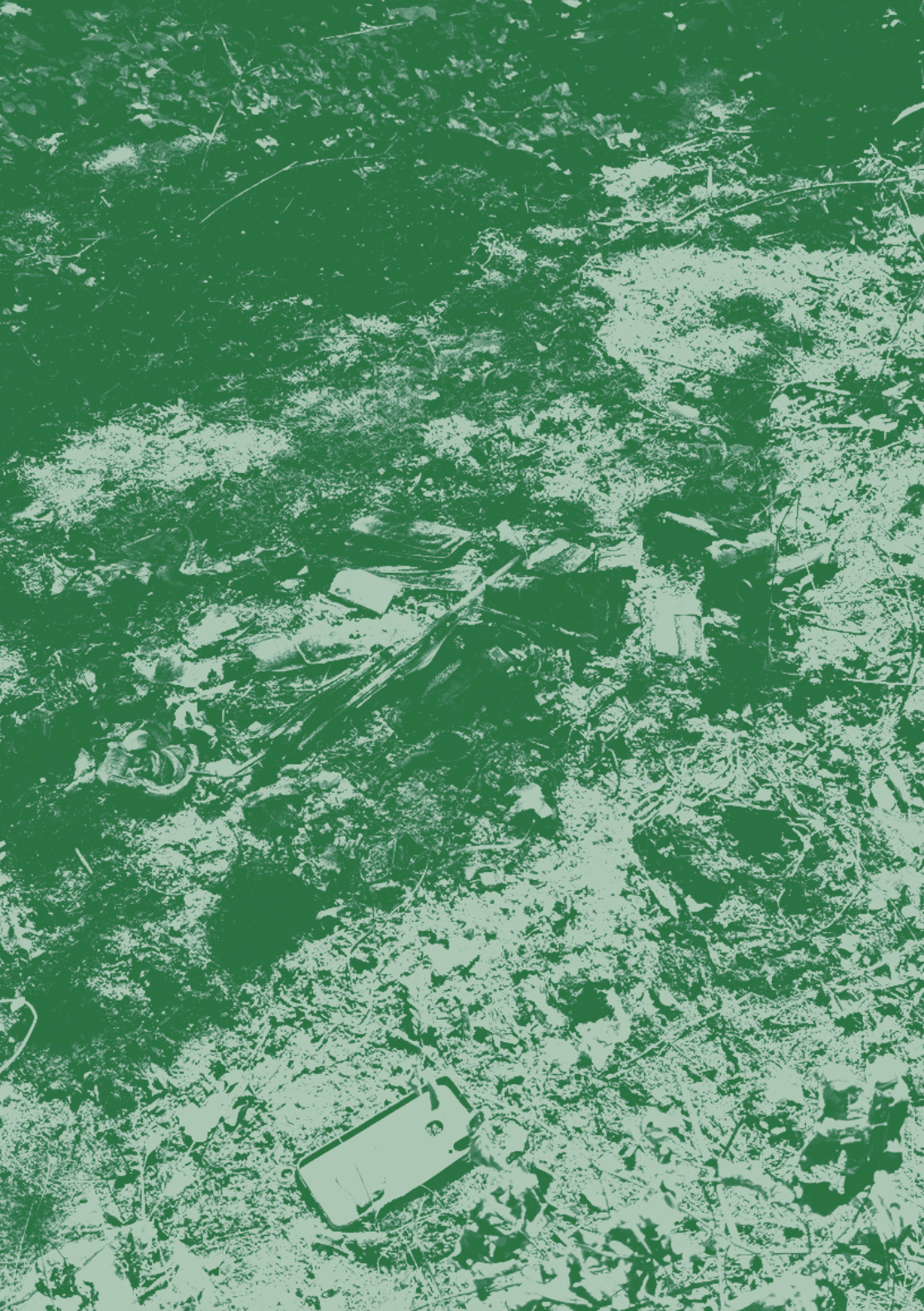
A little over a month ago, another cousin was murdered by the Zionist regime, his name was Hamza Nazzal, and like all the rest of the 256 people killed in the West Bank, and the thousands upon thousands killed in Gaza since October 7 (and before), there was no justification for their deaths. Only the strike of violence. A verdict declared with Israel's jurisdiction, a verdict declared by the bullet, a verdict declared by the coward in a soldier's uniform.

What is most disgusting and disturbing is that after they murdered Alaa and Anas, the IOF took their bodies. Even in death Zionist violence perpetuates. In Islam, the bodies of the dead are supposed to be buried within 24 hours. Now, that probably will not happen. A different value for a different life.

Qalqilya is known as the city surrounded by walls. The entire city is encircled by the apartheid wall, where there is only one road that people can enter and leave from. According to my aunt, the army is still in the city (at least as of the hour I called)







Not only are they in the city but they have blockaded the only route out of the city, trapping 52,000 people inside. This is what's happening now.

As Israel spirals into a manic episode of destruction, no one is safe. My aunt on the phone fears that she needs to leave Palestine, and escape to Amman. To her and other Palestinians, Israel will never stop its violence until everything that was once Palestine is gone. Until Palestine is a myth. An ancient past with an ancient people that no longer exists.

It is the same hand of violence that commits atrocities in Palestine, that does so here along the EU borders. The EU and Israel work hand and hand to commit the violent, genocidal acts that I see here in Bosnia/Croatia, as my aunt sees there, in Palestine.

As I wrote in the last newsletter, the EU has allocated 5.6 billion euros to Frontex for the period of 2021-2027. A mafia-style public military service that controls and violates bodies. The equipment they use are supplied by the same mafia terrorist organisation, the IOF. Israel is the 10th largest exporter of weapons from 2017-2021. In 2022, Israeli arms export totalled $12.5 billion.

That same year, Europe was the second largest receiver of Israeli defence goods, totalling 29% of purchases. These items consist of drones, unmanned aerial vehicles, air defence systems, radar and electronic warfare systems. We have already received reports of these technologies being used against people on the move along the Croatian borders.

On the flip side, from 2011 to 2020, Germany and Italy were the two largest exporters of arms to Israel after the USA, accounting for 24% (€682 million worth of arms) and for 5.9% (€342 million) respectively.

Since October 7th, EU countries like Germany and Italy have supplied Israel with F-35 jets, guided bombs, tanks, and submarines. These are the weapons of genocide that are being used now in Gaza. As of November 2nd Germany has now approved arms trade exports worth €303 million to Israel.

Both the EU and Israel use their vast military resources to control populations so as to prohibit movement, security, safety, or freedom. These resources are used to kill. This past week, four Moroccan men died while trying to cross to Croatia. They died of the cold.

They died because the EU has yet to provide any safe and legal passage into its territory for people on the move.

This is not an isolated incident. In the past month, No Name Kitchen has received reports of people on the move dying while trying to pass through the river into Slovenia, succumbing to illness, dying of hunger. We have also collected dozens of inquiries about people on the move who have gone missing while attempting to cross the borders. These deaths are Europe's deaths, even as they choose to turn a blind eye to the very violence they commit.

These people are invisible to the EU, but not for us here. As a team we went to the graveyard here in Bihać. In the back, etched into a corner on a slope, was a small section of graves with wooden markings painted green. These graves are of the unidentified people on the move who have died in transit. Lost and never returned. I wonder about their families, the questions they have over their lost loved ones, the answers they will never know. I wonder who they were. I fear thinking of their last moments. I cry over their lost identity.

Europe has stripped them of life. We will not forget that.

As I grieve, I work. As must all Palestinians in Gaza, Jerusalem, 1948 territories, West Bank and Diaspora. Until freedom comes. For us and for all.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

#4 Saturday, December 23

Dear Friends,

Bihać is a place where two worlds exist simultaneously with one another.

The first world is the Bosnian world. Where stores never have consistent working hours so you have to try your luck to see if they're open. It's where the old man on the corner of the river sets up his little station for roasting chestnuts. Everyone here looks prim and proper as they walk across the bridge in the puffiest winter jackets.

But as I walk through the city, there are holes, big and small on walls, large gaping cracks on sidewalks, and ruinated homes. Bullet holes are scattered across the city's buildings. This is where I remember the absent presence, a kind of memory, of past violence that lingers amongst the everyday. Bihać is a land filled with the remnants of war, where factions fighting for control left a scar on land and people during the 3 year siege of the city in the mid-90's. Infrastructure and bodies still speak to this violence. As I walk across Bihać's streets I notice the countless men who have lost their limbs in the war. All carry the permanence of violence in their bodies. My sweet 90 year-old neighbour, Joseph, recounts to us the suffocation of the siege of the city by Bosnian Serb forces. Its compression. How it enclosed spaces and people. How everyone lost something or someone in that time. Violence was a neighbour that lived on every corner. Now after 30 years, there is routine, Bosnians live in homes with relative safety, no longer filled with the tragedy of war, which has been replaced by an acute economic crisis and emigrating population.

In the same space as this Bosnian world exists a second world.

Within it people who exist invisibly visible within Bihać society: the people who are on the move. For them Bihać is a transit city, reflected in the countless people—usually men—walking along the sidewalks carrying backpacks. They are either recovering from being pushed back by Croatian police: wearing defeated looks, injured, tired and muddy; or are on their way to attempt to cross the Croatian border: dressed in fresh clothes, walking

at a faster pace, backpacks intact and filled with enough food to last a few days and fully charged power banks; encouraged by a future in Europe that feels so close to them. In both cases these people on the move typically find themselves in a few places inside Bihać: the Bihać Bus Station or various squats. This is the world where my work exists. I spend endless days lingering on the benches outside the bus station in the freezing cold amongst people who aren't allowed to seek warmth inside the station, just a few metres away. This is the world in which people on the move live, outside of society, unwelcome to join, even as temporary visitors. This is the world of a segregated racist system embedded into the everyday lives of those amongst which I work.

In my close friend, Moccine, I have seen how these systems can cut through people's psyche. Every time I join Moccine for coffee or lunch, or even for a doctor's visit to check on his injuries, he is timid. When I ask him what's wrong, he tells me "I know I am not wanted in these places, I become shy being here, I don't want to intrude on the life here". I try to explain that he is not the intrusion, that the intrusion is the society influenced by EU's racist rhetoric and border policies that make life inhospitable. But my words don't help the feelings that have now become so deeply embodied.

This feeling of intrusion is only amplified by the way society interacts with people on the move in Bihać. The segregation of this world becomes apparent in everyday interactions. PoM's are forced to sit in the back of the bus, while the front is reserved for western tourists and Bosnians. "No migrant allowed" signs are scattered in the city centre's cafes, and some without such signs reject entry and service to PoM's the moment they walk in. They are continuously forced to take their backpacks off whenever they enter those giant supermarkets because of the assumption that they will steal. Taxis and hotels purposely overcharge their services so that they can exploit the needs of people who already have so little. They are forced outside at all times, never able to integrate or interact with society. Invisibly visible.

This unloving environment that people on the move have to exist in extends to the denial of emergency medical care. A week ago, we were distributing supplies at the bus station, when we noticed that our Moroccan

friend, Hamza, had lost vision in one eye. His pupil had turned white, and he expressed that he was losing his sight. Hamza had been living outside in the cold, with no money and no transport to access the transit migrant camp. We decided to take him to the hospital even though the doctors usually turn us away. Nonetheless, we wanted to try to talk to the medical professionals about Hamza's immediate need for care.

No one was around, no line, no patients, around early evening at 8 p.m. there were around four doctors and two receptionists present, none of whom had patients to tend to. After about five minutes of waiting, a doctor arrived and asked my team member, Sori, to follow them alone, leaving Hamza waiting in the reception area.

The doctor gave them a lecture, saying "We know this man, he comes here often, he is crazy, you can't help him, you have to look after yourself. Those people from Morocco and Algeria, there is not even war, they are just coming, they are criminals. You have to protect yourself, they are dangerous."

After the doctor left, two more workers arrived and instructed Sori and Hamza to leave the hospital. Sori tried to reason with them, proposing that if they wouldn't provide him with medical care, then they could at least contact Lipa Camp to arrange for Hamza to be transported to see a doctor there. But they refused to even make a simple call. So Hamza was left, eyes still blinded, out onto the cold streets.

This is a complete rejection of the Hippocratic Oath that all doctors must take. An oath that mandates never rejecting care, that requires doing no harm. The countless times we have taken friends to doctors only to be denied care is shocking. We have brought people to the hospital with gaping wounds that urgently needed stitches, potential broken ribs, and people who suffered from epilepsy, and in all these cases PoM were denied care. These doctors have removed themselves from the ethics that their work requires. Instead of doing no harm, they are perpetuating harm.

The denial of care and services extends to other institutions within western society. When trying to get a friend some legal counsel on asylum claims in Europe the lawyer we contacted denied service, which only became evident why in the P.S. of her email "I can tell you that

Moroccans have one of the lowest recognition rates [of asylum claims] anywhere".

These dialogues in which Moroccans are not seen as "worthy migrants" because they are not directly affected by war has always shocked me. No one chooses to leave home. No one chooses to leave a life they know, the family they love, the culture they are a part of. No one willingly crosses by foot from Turkey toward the European Union without a need, a desperation, for something else from life.

Even more so, the issue with Morocco does not exist in a vacuum. The economic crisis that Moroccans live in isn't self-inflicted. This is a product of decades of French colonialism that has stripped Moroccans of the right to their land and resources, and then profited off of this exploitation. And now France has the audacity to reject Moroccans because they are "economic migrants".

Poverty is something worth seeking asylum from. Poverty is worth escaping home and seeking safety and security elsewhere. War should not be the only pathway for people to seek a different life. It is absurd, because it seems so obvious. What authority and power are these governments to decide and dictate who is most worthy to come to Europe? Poverty is a form of violence, even if the EU deems it not to be.

It is hard to ignore the systematic and everyday racism that surrounds people on the move, but it is also important to recount the moments of deep solidarity amongst locals here. We have met many courageous Bosnians, who give little of what they have to PoM's. Isma, an elderly woman who lives at the border between Croatia and Bosnia, witnesses dozens of people every day who have been pushed back, bloody, beaten and wet. She has very little yet she does not hesitate to give. Her story exists amongst many people here who continue to help in even the smallest ways.

People are not the institutions and societies that they were raised into. What is right is formed from an instinctual ethics. That gut feeling that what is wrong should never be ignored, because it is in that feeling that guides us away from the systems of racism and inequality that we were all socialised into.

Now almost two months in the field I am thankful to be in a space that allows me to be so attuned with that

gut feeling. I am in communion with my ethics here. It has transformed into the very foundation of all my action.

I hope you all have very happy holidays.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

Saturday, December 23

#5 Monday, January 8

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year !!!

The new year always has a way of allowing people to envision the unknown. It feels like an endless future. I wish I could hold on to the sense of possibility that the first week of January brings.

I marked this new year with my teammates and some PoM friends. We went together to the centre of Bihać, where the Christmas market festivities were still happening. Together we sat, drank, and laughed. More and more people gathered with us from the streets to share the moment of the final countdown for 2023.

After the clock struck midnight, ushering in 2024, we all decided we needed to dance. Around the corner there was a bar/club, so we made our way to the entrance, only to be denied entry because "it was too full". I could see clearly from the outside that there was plenty of space for us. The security guard was letting countless people in, even as I stood right in front of him trying to negotiate our entry. I realised quickly that "too full" was code for "we don't want migrants at our party".

The music from inside the club emanated outside. So we decided that if they won't let us join their party, we will make our own party right outside. So we started dancing and dancing and dancing. Right at the entrance. It felt like a kind of protest. We formed our own community, our own celebration, in front of the spaces where we were denied entry. It was a moment when I realised that protest and resistance were not just rage, but collective joy. And together our joy radiated. More people joined us, more PoMs, even some Bosnians, as we continued to dance only a few feet from the club's entrance. After about 20 minutes, the security guard and the club owner tried to move us away, but we simply moved a few feet and carried on dancing. But a little while later, they threatened to call the police. So we left.

Our joy didn't need a bounded space to exist in, we made room for it. At first we danced wherever we could: on the sidewalk, as we walked, in front of the Christmas

market. We kept the collective spaces of celebration alive in our movement.

We decided to head into the Christmas tent toward the stage where the live concert was in full swing. It was incredibly crowded; we squeezed between people and tables, trying to find any gap where we could stand and dance. When we got to a small space near the front of the stage, we looked at each other to confirm that this was the spot, and started dancing. This time we really let ourselves go in the dense crowd. All our energies were colliding, mixing and exploding. I should mention here that Bosnians (at least on that night) do not dance. So as we were dancing our hearts out to a funny Bosnian band singing covers of classic American songs, while everyone around us was standing still and giving us side-eyes. But we continued to dance and continued the joy.

At one point, Ahmad, my Syrian friend, was holding my hand up to the air and swaying it side to side, when a group of Bosnian women looked at me with a concerned glance. Once they realised I was willingly dancing with my friend, their concerned faces turned into looks of disgust. They left the party five minutes later. We continued to dance, even as people gave us dirty looks, even as women clung harder to their handbags, we danced and danced and danced.

Until a security guard aggressively grabbed the arm of my friend and told him that we all needed to get out because the party was reservation-only (which was not true, it was a public event). I immediately stepped between them and began aggressively poking the security guard while yelling at him (which was probably not the smartest idea). My friend, Youns, whispered into my ear:, “it is not worth getting so mad, let us go”. So I backed away, and in a single file, the twelve of us made our way through the still-standing crowd and left the venue.

Twice in a span of a few hours our collective joy was ruptured by this racism. What felt almost worse was we were kicked out of the second venue when the band only had one more song remaining of their set. The guards could have allowed us to stay for five more minutes, but they chose not to.

When we left the venue, we sat outside of the Christmas market tent on some benches, this time a little more defeated than after our first expulsion. We sat

around sipping our beers slowly, venting about how shit everything is. Even in this space, we found communion, safety, solidarity and trust that allowed all of us to rage. To rage over their precarious lives on the move, to rage over the poverty and war they experienced in their homelands, to rage over the constant discrimination, to rage over the brutality of the Croatian police towards them, and to rage about the fact the Bosnians wouldn't even allow them to dance.

Until one Palestinian friend, Sadam, started playing music on his phone and slowly grabbed all of our hands from the sullen spaces we inhabited and got the twelve of us back up to dance. Despite our rage and with the rage, the feeling of joy still lingered. So again, we started to dance, and dance. We began to dabke, the traditional Palestinian dance, and gradually the sting of racism was overtaken by the joy of this celebration.

We spent the rest of the night dancing, laughing and cursing the Croatian police officers. It was beautiful. And definitely one of the best New Year's celebrations I have ever had.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

#6 Monday, January 19

Dear Friends,

Plješivica is a mountain range that separates the Croatian and Bosnian territories around Bihać. Many attempt to cross this treacherous, steep and long path, which takes around 8 to 10 hours of uphill climbing. The Plješivica route is one of the most dangerous pathways to enter Croatia. The high altitude means that PoM must navigate snow-covered terrain during the night to avoid detection in daylight. Most PoM do not have proper clothing or gear to endure the extreme temperatures, as a result, some have caught gangrene and have had to receive emergency amputations. Many have lost their lives in these mountains. In addition to dangerous weather conditions and the lurking surveillance of the Croatian police, PoM also face the threat of wild animals. In the past few weeks there have been multiple animal attacks on PoM's in these regions. They have sustained serious injuries, but are relatively safe now.

Looking at the mountain range from afar in Bihać, there is an apparent cleared out path of the forested mountain. A single bald strip of trees wiped away from the surface of the mountain facing Bosnia. In 2020 the Croatian state launched an entire operation to strip the mountain of trees. This apparent bald line that stretches from the base of the Plješivica to the summit was a strategy by the Croatian government to enhance border control, allowing them to monitor and apprehend people on the move. The deforested strip of land was made by a state management company under orders of the Ministry of the Interior. The Croatian Border Administration justified this action, stating it was to provide "better visibility" from both air and land, making it easier to detect people crossing the mountain. Ever since, it has become an omnipresent figure surveilling the Bihać landscape. Alongside this ecocide, the Croatia state has installed thermal imaging systems, usually cameras or drones, to detect the presence of people via their body heat to alert the border guard and push them back.

Croatian state violence extends to land and people. Nothing is safe from their destruction and destabilisation. The irony is they destroy their very

'own' nature, militarise their border, deforest their mountains and fields, all in the name of protection. To protect the invisible border, to protect Europe as its watchful guard dogs. To protect it from the "threat" of innocent people who are moving towards a new life.

The destruction of the natural landscape does not stop in Plješivica. Recently, the NNK team went undercover monitoring a forested border land inside Croatia to investigate and record military and police presence. As we moved through the region we noticed a sharp end to the forest, where large patches of trees had been felled and stacked along the roadside. We tried to locate any evidence of a lumber plant, but found nothing. The chopped forests were located right next to massive Croatian military tents, surrounded by a large number of military vehicles and telescopes, strategically positioned on top of a hill where many PoM try to cross.

Evidence of the destruction of nature transcends this specific border. When talking to our friends, we hear stories of their homelands–, many of which are shaped by war, poverty, and destruction–but within these stories we have started hearing personal accounts of the climate crisis. No longer does this feel like a fearful future. It has become present. It has arrived in the movement of people. We met people from Saharan countries who say they no longer can survive in their homelands. "The winters used to bring rain, but no longer" they explained to me, "it is too hot to survive there anymore; you melt, you melt". For many of these people water has become a scarcity, a precious item that is gone as soon as it comes.

We are only seeing the start of climate migration here at the borders. It makes me wonder, what will happen in ten years, in five years, in one year? How many more people are going to seek to move north when their climate and their homes become unlivable? And how many more people will Europe turn away? What propaganda will Europe soon use to reject people, vilifying them for what they have been victims of?

Amongst our friends here, nature has become a feared presence. The days of snow and rain become dreaded, especially as they undertake the exhausting four to seven-day hikes through the Croatian forests to reach Slovenia, the first place of safety from the violence

of the Balkan route. While having coffee with my friend Safaa, a 29 year-old Syrian woman, she pointed at the distant forest and spoke to this sense of fear:

> "I fear this now, when before I found so much peace there. I used to love to be with trees- now if I go near a forest I feel my body shut down in fear, it brings back memories of when the police caught us".

I, too, used to find peace in nature before coming here. I used to love sitting and walking in the forest for hours alone. I used to love long walks in the rain. These moments of peaceful solitude in nature feel very far now. It's hard to enjoy nature when I know all the violence and suffering that happens in the forests and mountains I see in the distance. It is hard to enjoy the sound of rain from my bedroom when I know people are stuck outside with no way to shelter themselves.

When I confided in my friend Serhat, a sixty-year-old PoM who escaped Turkey after being a political prisoner for 20 years, about my lost connection to nature, he responded via Google Translate:

> "You're right, but nature is very beautiful after all. I lost so many comrades in the mountains and cities. Sometimes I don't know if I should be happy or sad for being alive. But nature and the world are beautiful as long as people don't contaminate it. If we don't implement the objective of establishing a truly beautiful future for humanity, for our siblings, the world will become an even worse place. If you look at it from a spiritual point of view, the world is a garden. Plant gardens, plant crops and this world will be enough for everyone. People's greed contaminates this world, someone needs to clean it. We are the cleaning workers."

I keep these words close. And I hope you do too.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

#7 Wednesday, January 24

Dear Friends,

Transit camps, in theory, are meant to be spaces of sanctuary, protection and care for people on the move. They are meant to be spaces where basic human needs, and basic human respect are given to people whose dignity is constantly stripped by the violence endured while along the Balkan route. However, in practice, camps function as a structure to segregate and monitor PoM while providing them below average living conditions.

The team in Bihać has seen over the past few weeks an increase of institutional violence happening within the city, especially amongst minors. Unaccompanied minors are some of the most vulnerable individuals travelling across the Balkans. They are the ones who need to be protected and safeguarded from violence both inside and outside the EU borders. Yet, we have observed a very different reality amongst the institutions here in Bihać, specifically Borici Camp, the transit camp in the centre of Bihać reserved for unaccompanied minors, families, and women.

With mass evictions of Subotica in northern Serbia, Bihać has now become the main pathway to the EU along the Balkan route. We are seeing a surge of people here, which only leads to more visible acts of institutionalised violence.

A couple of weeks ago we found two minors, both around sixteen years old, lost, scared and tired, at the Bihać Bus station. They had just been pushed back into Bosnia by Croatian border officials. They tried to go back to Borici camp, but when they arrived they were denied entry.

The date of birth that the camp had placed on their official ID cards claimed that both of their birthdays were on 01/01/2006, making them both 18 and disqualified to stay at the family camp. The boys explained to me that they never put their birth date as 01/01/2006, that was the birthday assigned (without their knowledge) to them when they arrived at Borici Camp. But only one look at their faces and it becomes obvious that neither of them were 18; they were much, much younger. When I saw them at the bus station, I was certain that this was just a

logistical error, and I told the boys to meet me in front of the camp the next morning, so that I could talk to the officials at the camp, and be a mediator or translator for them. That night they slept in an abandoned building.

The next morning, I met them at a playground in front of the Borici camp and walked with them to the gates. The police stopped us, and I requested to talk to anyone who worked at Borici Camp about the children's predicament. A lady first angrily appeared, whose priority seemed extremely skewed. She didn't even look at the two boys standing right by my side; instead, she kept asking me who I was (a question that shouldn't even matter). She refused to respond to my questions or requests, she wouldn't even look at the boys, or ask if they were okay after spending the night on the streets. Her only reaction was coldness.

Then the next person came, but just like the other administrator, there was no response, no solution. The only answer I would get concerning the boys' situation was, "our hands are tied, we tried to contact the inspector, but he says they have to go to Lipa [the adult camp that is a six hour walk away]".

Another administrator then walked in. My frustration grew as more people who provided no real solutions continued to come to speak to me. This administrator was aggressive, he spoke authoritatively to me and the boys, and reprimanded them for not looking at him while he spoke, all while everything he was saying pointed to the boys' abandonment by these fraught institutions.

There was no solution given, except free transport to Lipa Camp, which the boys refused by saying, "they'd rather live on the streets than go to Lipa".

Before the three of us left, defeated by such blatant institutional violence, I turned to ask the group of administrators if there were many people in the camp with the birthday 01/01/2006, and one of them said "yes". I followed up by asking "so they are all kicked out the moment their collective birthdays comes?", and the answer I got was "yes".

Life on the move is already precarious enough, and it is truly a shame that these institutions have added to the systems of violence that PoM face everyday. These institutions were meant to protect these minors but they failed. Even with beds available their "hands were

tied", because of a faulty birthday. This intentional mistake left the teenage boys abandoned on the street because their system's way to "protect" is reduced to strict rules, procedures and guidelines. What is written on paper must be followed. The birthday on the document is the truth, at least, to the administrators.

I think they have forgotten (or have never known) that to protect means to care. To protect means to communicate, to translate, to make things comprehensible in a way and language that people can understand, so that they can have agency over the decisions and bureaucracy that encircle their lives.

Their "protection" is limited to the scope in which they are stuck within their own rules and regulations. But for the boys I met on the street, these rules did the opposite of protect. This act of bureaucratic violence left the boys deprived of all basic necessities and protections. It removed their access to shelter, food, water, and safety. Instead it placed them in a position of greater violence. All because of a wrong birthday.

The team was able to find them a safe house to stay in. They are doing okay.

#7

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

#8 Wednesday, January 31

Dear Friends,

I left Bihać two days ago. My three-month fieldwork has now come to an end. It is hard to find myself in a new setting, around new people, and new places after existing in one place for so long. Bihać became my entire life for those three months. I forgot what life was like before going there and I couldn't imagine what life would be like after. I was in a time capsule. Stuck in a moment, in a place. Stuck between borders of violence. Every moment there felt like time stood still. The moments of joy felt like a lifetime. The moments of violence felt like an eternity. For three months my perception of time was all-consumed by this space of hyper-fluctuating emotions. For three months I was placed in the heart of what state violence looks like. Now I've left, which feels like being placed back into a false reality after living for so long in a space where truth was the only reality that surrounded me.

It's difficult to leave the field with the same (if not greater) level of violence as when I entered. Even with all the reporting the team and I have done, addressing the impacts of border violence will require a lifetime of work. But I still have faith in change, even if it is small. I still believe in the work we were able to do over the past three months. Even if a group of six anarchists can't change the system, we fit ourselves into the cracks of the system. We have placed ourselves in the spaces that are unseen, unwatched, and in these spaces we have created community with people on the move. Life was able to persevere, together in solidarity, even in the most unlikely spaces.

I can dwell on all the violence that remains even as I leave the field. I can dwell on the never-ending despair, pain and trauma. I can dwell on my own sense of rage over how easy it was to take a bus to Croatia while I left friends behind who had no way to go except through the forest and through violence. These realities still exist in me, but what also exists is the spaces of love, joy, and community that I am leaving behind. These unlikely spaces of cosiness and comfort in the most uncomfortable of situations are what I will miss the most.

I spent the last few days on the field saying goodbye to the people and places that formed my life here in Bihać. My last day in the field was spent with my friends around a bonfire outside of Lipa Camp, singing, dancing, clapping, and (secretly) crying. We gathered around the fire as my friend Illyas serenaded us for hours singing political Amazigh songs, changing the words occasionally to curse Croatia. With the PoM friends and my teammates, we gathered all together in a space of communion, a space of dreams. I left these beautiful people with the same words, "Inshallah khair": God willing, all will be well. A simple shared dream that exists and is spread like wildfire over the bonfire. Inshallah khair. The hopefulness that all will be well, that more will come, that they will cross the borders. In these spaces of togetherness we all dream the same dream. A communal anti-border dream. Together we sit, clap, laugh and dance. Together we dream of a better tomorrow. A tomorrow where our friends can cross. A tomorrow where our friends are out of the violence. A tomorrow of dreams, hopes, and desire to be fulfilled.

I left the field filled with this sense of hope. A feeling of hope that is more powerful than any form of rage. For hope is the most powerful expression of rage, especially when faced with constant, insurmountable violence. To hope is to resist the world's inequality with the power of a dream that is linked deeply to a spiritual desire of more. That spiritual desire can not be beaten by a baton. So we hope. Together our collective hope ignites the world.

Even though I have left the field in Bihać, I am technically still in the field. Two weeks ago I got an offer to start and create a pilot project here in Croatia to monitor where people are moving. Over the past three months, the Balkan route has dramatically shifted and people are taking new routes to attempt to reach the EU. So now I'm being placed to do solo fieldwork, reporting on spaces of movement and violence along the border between Slovenia and Croatia. I have moved to Zagreb, Croatia to start a new project in a few days.

I still have many stories to write, but for now I need some rest. I need some time to process all of this. If the space and time feel right, I will continue this newsletter while I am doing this work in Croatia.

There are many projects in the works, I am excited to share them with you when the time is right. Until then…. Goodbye :) Hopefully I'll see many of you soon when I move to Glasgow in March.

Thanks for reading.

Love and solidarity forever,

Masa

Wednesday, January 31

Research with No Name Kitchen (NNK)
nonamekitchen.org

Updates from the Border
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For a free PDF copy, additional resources on border abolition, to share insights, or to book a workshop with us, please email: **borderabolition@protonmail.me**

Listen to Masa Nazzal & Ilias Titaou's cassette tape Slovenia Inshallah at glarc.bandcamp.com

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Biographies

Masa Nazzal is an organiser based in London whose work concerns border violence along the EU's Balkan borders against people on the move. She spends a lot of time in Bosnia and Croatia with the grassroots collective, No Name Kitchen, researching and recording testimonies of personal accounts of violence committed by the EU.

Jeanne Coppens lives and works in Brussels. She is currently writing a play on grief and cities, whilst completing a research project about lawless citizenship-withdrawals in Belgium. She gives exhibition tours to kids and adults.

Myrthe Van Rompaey is a graphic designer from Brussels, passionate about type and history. She is conducting typographic research at ANRT, France.

Insalaha Collective emerged from conversations around this publication. Through workshops, sounding projects, and militant research, it seeks to engage in concrete discussions on border abolition in the UK and Europe.

Updates from the border is a personal account of an abolitionist organiser moving through Europe's eastern borderlands. Gathering acts of witnessing, poetic fragments, and visual remnants, this chapbook unfolds through a series of eight emails in which Masa Nazzal communicates with friends, family, and fellow organisers across the world. Through these exchanges, she attempts to make sense of the violence she encounters: the genocide committed by Zionist forces against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and the traces of illegal pushbacks on the EU's frontiers. *Updates from the border* takes us through fractured memories, intimate conversations, and militant research to remind us that borderlands are not just sites of control, but spaces to be crossed, dismantled, and reimagined. This publication emerges alongside Masa Nazzal's debut cassette tape *Slovenia Inshallah* (GLARC, Glasgow).

Insalaha Collective